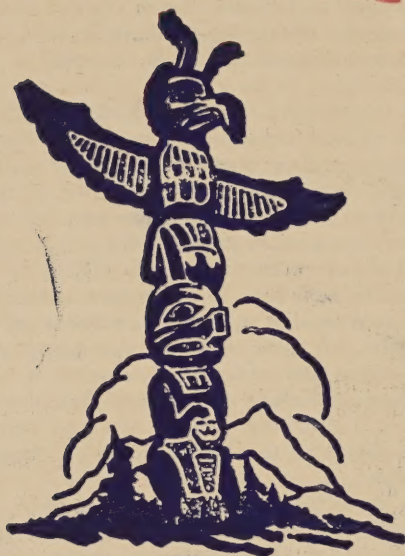


Ketchikan, Al 6/19/18
ALASKA
PERM. FILE



A BRIEF HISTORY
of
Ketchikan and Saxman
and
The Presbyterian
Churches
in those communities

The mouth of what is now known as Ketchikan Creek was no doubt the site of a summer fishing camp of the Indians for many years before the first white men established themselves here, in 1887. In that year a small salmon cannery was moved here from Boca de Quadra and stood on the present site of the Stedman Hotel. The cannery was operated for three seasons and then burned to the ground.

An employee of the cannery, George Clark, stayed on after the cannery burned and erected a saltery and a trading post. The saltery operated during the summer months, packing the salmon from nearby waters, and the trading post presumably operated the year around. The Indians of the surrounding district undoubtedly had furs to trade and there was some gold mining up the Unuk River on the mainland. A good deal of the trade with these mines undoubtedly was carried on with the Cassiar country of British Columbia, but some of it probably trickled down by way of Behm Canal to the trading post on Tongass Narrows.

The postoffice of Ketchikan was established in April, 1892, and George Clark took in a partner, M. E. "Mike" Martin, and the town began a slow growth. This was accelerated shortly after the beginning of the Klondike gold rush. Several families who had settled in Wrangell in the expectation that it would be one of the main gateways to the gold country, moved to Ketchikan after the White Pass railroad was built and Wrangell was bypassed in favor of the easier Skagway route. Several gold prospects were discovered in the vicinity of Ketchikan and something of a mining boom was in progress in this district.

Two large mercantile firms were established in the last years of the century—Tongass Trading Co. and J. R. Heckman & Co., as well as smaller businesses. In 1900 the Fidalgo Island Packing Co. built a cannery at Ketchikan, and since that time the community has had a steady growth.

The town was incorporated in the summer of 1900 and its first Common Council was elected at that time. A school was established at the same time and a public library fol-

lowed soon afterward. In 1908 the New England Fish Co. built its cold storage plant and Ketchikan was on its way toward being the principal fishing center of Alaska. The Ketchikan Cold Storage was built in 1913 and a number of additional canneries were built in the years that followed.

SAXMAN

Saxman, three miles south of Ketchikan on Tongass Narrows, was founded in the Fall of 1894 by the Tongass and Cape Fox tribes. It was then a wilderness, and it was named after a former Presbyterian missionary who lost his life in a severe storm in the winter of 1887 while on a canoe trip from Port Tongass to Annette Island in the interest of the Tongass tribe.

Through Dr. Sheldon Jackson, General Agent of Education for Alaska, a school building was built in 1895, and Mr. James W. Young appointed as the first government teacher. Mr. Young not only taught, but preached to the natives, and started at Saxman a town government. Mr. Young was assisted in his work by his daughter, and occasionally by some of the members of his family that came to visit him at Saxman.

In September of 1898, Rev. Edward Marsden, a graduate of the Sitka Industrial School in 1890, of Marietta College in 1895, and of Lane Theological Seminary in 1898, was appointed and commissioned as missionary to Saxman and vicinity. His work commenced under favorable circumstances and he preached regularly to the Saxman people either at Saxman, during the Fall and Winter, or out in their hunting and fishing camps during Spring and Summer.

Saxman was known only as a mission station until in the winter of 1902 when, through the assistance of Dr. S. Hall Young, General Missionary for Alaska, a regular church organization was effected. The matter of a church organization had been very thoroughly discussed among the native converts of the Saxman Mission Station for a whole year, and they had prayed over the matter in nearly every service asking God's help and guidance. The people had been made ready for this organization through public and private con-

ferences and in many other ways.

Dr. S. Hall Young had been invited to aid the missionary and to represent the Presbytery of Alaska at this organization. Dr. Young and Edward Marsden spent four days talking to and examining the candidates for membership of the new church. In cases where a man and woman had been living together as husband and wife according to the tribal custom, the same was made legal and Christian through the performance of the regular prescribed ceremony in the presence of the congregation by Dr. Young. The same was done with reference to Baptism.

After these matters were satisfactorily settled, the organization of the church was effected at a service of worship on Sunday, January 26, 1902. The service began at 10:30 a.m. and continued until after twelve o'clock noon. There were 19 members received into the newly born church that day.

For a number of years the Saxman Church continued to grow in numerical and spiritual strength. Members were only received as they had had plenty of time to think about the step they were taking. The people prospered materially and old heathenish customs that had degraded the people disappeared. Year after year when the session would have its first meeting in the fall, the elders and the minister would report on where they had held services each Lord's Day during the summer on the fishing grounds, and that all of the members had remained faithful. Services were held regularly during the summer at Moira Sound, Nath Arm, Yes Bay, Loring, Quadra, Kashakes, and Cape Camaano.

In 1900, the Rev. Edward Marsden began preaching to the natives who lived in Ketchikan, and a mission station was established in Ketchikan. Invitations came also from Metlakatla to hold services there. In the March 28, 1912, minutes of the Saxman session record book, it says, "As a result of our efforts at Ketchikan, a sufficient number of persons there are ready for a Presbyterian Church."

It was about this time that members of the Saxman session began to lose their former enthusiasm for teaching their people the Word of God. The pastor endeavored to bring strong

pressure on the minds of the session as to its plain duties.

As Saxman began to decline more and more, and Ketchikan began to build up, the Rev. Edward Marsden worked more and more in Ketchikan and Metlakatla, leaving most of the work in Saxman to a lay worker, Mr. Andrew Thomas of Klawock.

In 1916 very few regular services were held at Saxman, but nearly all of them were held at the Ketchikan Mission. The few members of the Saxman Church remaining in the village preferred to worship with the Tsimpshians at Ketchikan. Most of the Saxman people, while they had not moved away permanently, stayed at many other places during the winter months. The Rev. Edward Marsden commenting on the situation said, "We did our very best to keep up the Saxman work, but since there were not enough there to work with, our work was conducted with more profit among the Tsimpshians and Haidas of Ketchikan."

Ketchikan continued as a mission station until June 21, 1925, when the organization of the church was consummated. The service was presided over by the Rev. David Waggoner, and he was assisted by Dr. W. O. Forbes, the Rev. Russell Pederson, and the Rev. F. R. Falconer, the pastor. There were 34 charter members, including 15 Tsimpshians, 11 Thlingits, 7 Whites and 1 Haida.

The building in which the Ketchikan congregation was meeting was old and not worth the expense of keeping in repair, so in 1927, a building fund campaign began. The matter of protecting the ground at the rear of the church building was discussed and it was decided that in view of the fact that unoccupied tide lands are open to location by anyone so desiring, something should be done to protect the rights of the church to the ground in question. Members of the church set up piling, securely braced, in order to protect the property from would be jumpers.

The Rev. George J. Beck came to Ketchikan in the fall of 1930 to succeed the Rev. Mr. Falconer. Under his leadership the new building was erected, and the first meeting was held in the building on November 15, 1931. The Church was dedicated by members

of Presbytery on their way to the meeting of Presbytery at Hydaburg in April, 1932.

The Rev. Donald G. Christiansen became the pastor of the Ketchikan Church in January, 1936, taking the place of the Rev. Mr. Beck, who had retired, after spending more than 35 years in the work in Alaska. When the Rev. Mr. Christiansen left the field in the spring of 1940, Mr. Beck filled the pulpit again until the coming of the Rev. James W. Hall in the Fall of 1941. The Rev. Mr. Hall was pastor until June, 1944. The Rev. Edward D. Freeman, the present pastor, arrived in Ketchikan in November, 1944.

During the years of the Ketchikan Church's history, the membership has never been large, but there has been a steady growth in spiritual things, including an ever increasing sense of stewardship. The first financial statement of the Ketchikan Church was made at the annual congregational meeting in April, 1929. The total receipts for that year were \$245.10, all of it going for current expenses. The following year saw the first every member canvass in this Church and the first use of envelopes. At a congregational meeting, March 1930, total receipts amounted to \$461.95, one-third of which came from envelopes, and \$81 of which was contributed to benevolences. From this meager beginning, the Church in its last full 12 month year, 1946-1947, contributed \$1727.65 to current expenses, \$600 on the minister's salary, and \$443.71 to benevolences. For 1948, the Church has accepted a benevolence quota of \$666. During this last year the Church was able to complete its Restoration Fund quota of \$741.52.

Although the Ketchikan Church has a membership of only 67, its members, under the impetus of the New Life Movement, are looking forward to winning some of Ketchikan's 4500 unchurched to Jesus Christ and to membership in the Presbyterian Church.

This information has been gathered from statements from many sources. Mr. Bob DeArmond, city editor of the Ketchikan Daily News, prepared the early history of Ketchikan. The Rev. Edward D. Freeman wrote the history of Saxman and the Presbyterian Churches from information gleaned from the session minute books of both churches.

SAXMAN RECLAIMED

THROUGH

MISSIONARY EFFORT

BY

Emery F. Tobin

(Reprint from Ketchikan, Alaska, Chronicle,
Saturday, January 29, 1921)

From a community where intemperance and the practice of such things as potlatching were the rule, the town of Saxman, three miles south of Ketchikan, has within the past year been revived into a progressive town, whose every inhabitant has followed the straight and narrow path, and where not a sign of the old evils has been evident.

During the past winter the 125 people there have repaired the church, the Salvation Army hall, and many of the houses, and are planning the introduction of electricity and other improvements. Yet in spite of these measures for good on the part of the inhabitants, thirty children are growing up in ignorance there owing to the failure of the government in the last eight years to furnish teachers.

The town of Saxman is inhabited only three months of the year. These are the months of November, December and January. Beginning about the first of February the people scatter, going to many other quarters on their fishing or hunting expeditions. During the rest of the year it is practically deserted.

In the six winters previous to last winter, this season of the year, when all the native inhabitants were at home, was spent to a great extent in carousing and intemperance. No regular church services were held there and the community was entirely neglected by the government, as it is today.

With the coming of the Rev. F. R. Falconer, who revived the services of the Presbyterian church there during the winter of 1919 and continued them this season, the town has transformed itself and the evil is no longer tolerated. The town government has reorganized itself under a mayor and council of seven, and is doing good administrative work.

Every member of the community as far as can be determined, has been a church-goer during the past three months and they have put the house of worship back in order after it had fallen into a state of dilapidation. For nearly seven years it had been entirely neglected and unused. Now the roof has been resingled, the collapsed stairway to the church rebuilt, and the interior put back into shape.

Appeals for School Fail

There is a good government school building in the village, but this during the past seven or eight years has been unoccupied. Appeals to the United States Bureau of Education by Rev. Mr. Falconer for a teacher have been without avail, the bureau considering the time the children are there too short for the inauguration again of school activities and the difficulty of getting a teacher for so short a time too great.

As a consequence of the lack of schooling it is said the natives there show a greater proportion of illiteracy than any similar community in Alaska. The parents have shown themselves eager to secure schooling for their children and have offered to let their children remain in the village, to go to school while they disperse to their various spring and summer occupations. During the coming year Rev. Mr. Falconer intends to make further efforts to secure a teacher for the school, this time through the Territorial Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Henderson.

Back to Old Customs

Following the Rev. Mr. Marsden's transfer to Metlakatla and the Ketchikan stations in 1912, no missionary was sent to the village until Rev. Mr. Falconer took up the work. The natives to a great degree went back to their old customs and intemperance grew.

The practice of pot-latching was resumed, and many a native lost his accumulated wealth of years of work through one such festival.

According to the old native chiefs, when a member of their tribe died, he traveled to the happy hunting grounds, first passing through a large forest. Then he would come to a large lake and there he could see across to the land of joy, with happy sprites dancing merrily. On the opposite shore there would be a boat-man with his craft. Though the traveler called again and again in a loud voice, the boat-man, so the story goes, would make no sign, till at last, the spirit of the de-

parted would become tired and lie down preparatory to going to sleep. Then he would yawn, and the boat-man, hearing the yawn, would row over and get him.

Even when the traveler from the mortal world reached the other side his troubles would not be over, according to the belief, unless his friends or relatives here sent something to him. If he should go to a fire, the other spirits would warn him to keep away, because 'no fire had been sent to him.' If he should ask for a blanket, it would be denied because his mortal friends had sent none to him, and so on, whether it was food or any other comfort or necessity.

The means his relatives had of sending articles to the departed, was by the custom of pot-latching. The thought that a departed relative might be lacking some comfort because none had been sent him by his mortal relatives, secured a very strong hold on the adherents of the old religion, and if some one had recently died his relatives would have no peace of mind until they had done away with their own goods through the pot-latch, which consisted of destroying or giving away all the goods the dead person might require. So long as the living relatives had use of any article, the spirit of the dead would not.

This belief has practically disappeared now and is no longer practiced at Saxman and very little elsewhere.

EDUCATIONAL WORK

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS

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April, 1921.

Ketchikan.



THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, KETCHIKAN, ALASKA

A Brief History of The First Presbyterian Church

Ketchikan, Alaska

A BRIEF HISTORY of THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Ketchikan, Alaska

The work of the Presbyterian Church in this vicinity was begun in the village of Saxman, three miles south of Ketchikan on Tongass Narrows. In September of 1898, the Rev. Edward Marsden was commisisoned as missionary to Saxman and vicinity. The Rev. Mr. Marsden, Alaska's first Native minister, was a graduate of the Sitka Industrial School in 1890, of Marietta College in 1895, and of Lane Theological Seminary in 1898.

In 1900, the Rev. Edward Marsden began preaching to the Natives who lived in Ketchikan, and through these efforts a mission station was established. In the minutes of the session of the Saxman Presbyterian Church for March 28, 1912, there is this statement: "As a result of our efforts at Ketchikan, a sufficient number of persons there are ready for a Presbyterian Church."

About this time, Saxman began to lose much of its population, and Ketchikan began to develop into a larger town. The Rev. Mr. Marsden worked more and more in Ketchikan and in Metlakatla, and left most of the work in Saxman to a lay worker, Mr. Andrew Thomas of Klawock.

In 1916 very few regular services were held at Saxman, and nearly all of the services were held at the Ketchikan Mission. The few members of the Saxman Church remaining in the village preferred to worship with the Tsimpseans at Ketchikan. Most of the Saxman people stayed at many

other places during the winter months although they had not moved away permanently. The Rev. Mr. Marsden, in commenting on the situation said, "We did our very best to keep up the Saxman work, but since there were not enough there to work with, our work was conducted with more profit among the Tsimpseans and Haidas of Ketchikan."

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The building in which the Ketchikan congregation was meeting was old and not worth the expense of keeping it in repair, and so a building fund campaign was started in 1927. The matter of protecting the ground at the rear of the church building for the proposed new church was discussed, and it was decided that since unoccupied tide lands are open to location by anyone that something should be done to protect the rights of the church to the ground. The members of the church set up piling in order to protect the property from any jumpers.

In the fall of 1930 the Rev. George J. Beck succeeded the Rev. Mr. Falconer as pastor. Under his leadership the present building was erected, and the first meeting held in it on November 15, 1931. The church was dedicated by the members of Alaska Presbytery on their way to the spring meeting of Presbytery at Hydaburg in April, 1932.

The Rev. Donald G. Christiansen became the pastor of the Ketchikan Church in January 1936. He took the place of the Rev. Mr. Beck who retired from the active ministry after spending more than 35 years in the work of our Presbyterian Church in Southeastern Alaska. The Rev. Mr. Beck still lives in Ketchikan. When the Rev. Mr. Christiansen left the field in the spring of 1940, the Rev. Mr. Beck filled the

pulpit until the Rev. James W. Hall came in the fall of 1941. The Rev. Mr. Hall was pastor until June of 1944. The Rev. Edward D. Freeman came as pastor in November of 1944 and served until May of 1950.

There followed a period of almost a year and a half when the church was without the services of a regular pastor. During that time services were held by the minister from Metlakatla or by local people. Through the winter, the Rev. Paul Prouty, missionary-at-large, ministered to the church and spent much of his time in the improvement of the church building.

The present pastor, the Rev. Clayton M. Shotwell, arrived in the last of September of 1951. Since that time, the interior of the church has been redecorated both downstairs and in the Manse apartment upstairs. New members are being received into the church regularly, and the church will continue to grow with the town.

There is a great future ahead for the town of Ketchikan. The construction of a pulp mill is just beginning. The cost of it will be \$46,000,000, and it will provide jobs for another 700 people on a permanent basis in Ketchikan. Other businesses and industries will locate here as a result of the pulp mill. The Presbyterian Church, through the Board of National Missions, is doing everything possible to meet the challenge of the future. A house is being purchased for a Manse which will provide the church with much needed space upstairs for its many varied activities. The church can then become a real community center for the youth of the vicinity for their recreation as well as their religious activities.

Although the membership of the First Presbyterian Church of Ketchikan has never been large, it is looking forward to the future to a real growth in its membership—both in numbers and in the knowledge and service of God.

